



**Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area**

**Board Meeting  
Thursday, October 20, 2022**

Members present: Tom Pashley, Kelly Miller, George Little, Matt Hausser, Frank Quis, Andy Hofmann, Linda Parsons, Caroline Xiong

Not present: Bonnie McPeake, Warren Lewis, Natalie Dean-Hawkins, Wayne Vest,

Staff present: Phil Werz, Donna Garner

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Pashley.

Chairman Pashley entertained a motion to approve the August 11, 2022, minutes. Member Miller made the motion to approve the minutes, Member Hausser seconded it, and the motion passed.

**Financial Report-Andy Hofmann**

**Room Tax Collections:**

The CVB is pacing slightly ahead of pace from the last fiscal year, in the first two months of 2022-23. July was flat to the same month as last year, while August was 7% higher. Overall, we are 3% ahead of last year's record pace.

**Expenditures:**

We ended the month of August \$239,000 in arrears, but this sum is directly proportional to how our marketing partner, Media One, bills on a quarterly basis, and we are only, record-wise, into two months of the fiscal year. This will balance out in the next 30-60 days. There is no reason for concern. Technically speaking, we are within budget.

**Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet):**

Also, you were provided a copy of the Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position as of October 6, 2022. The balance sheet showed \$2.6 million in total assets, \$957,000 in total liabilities, for a total fund balance of a little more than \$1.6 million.

Chairman Pashley entertained a motion to approve the Financial Report. Member Miller made the motion, Member Parsons seconded it, and the motion passed.

### **President & CEO Report-Phil Werz**

Room Occupancy collections for the first two months of the 2022-23 FY are up 3.5% from last year's record breaking collections. July's numbers stayed relatively equal to last July. For August, we are up \$18,000 over last year. As anticipated, things seem to be averaging out, collection wise.

VisitNC will be launching a campaign designating 2023 as "Year of the Trail". Phil went to a media event in Durham last week and this was discussed in much detail. They plan to host trail events in every county, and showcase NC's incredible trail network. This initiative will hopefully empower all people to experience the benefits of trails and brand NC as a Great Trails State. We are developing some great ideas to promote our trails in Moore County and get people out and about, in the destination.

The first initiative, which we talked about at our last meeting, is called Pinecone Pathways Program. We are planning to partner with Starworks, to have them create a mold, to make glass pinecones. We will own the mold and then have them make 100 pinecones. The program will run for 10 weeks and we will hide 10 pinecones per week, on 10 different trails throughout the county. It will run from mid-March to around the end of May. The plan is to attach a QR code onto each pinecone, that will take you to an information page, which will outline the program and where you can register your pinecone when found. We also want to use local businesses, that when you make a purchase, you get a "hint" on where to find the pinecones. Right now, the plan is to do something along the same line, with the Seagrove Potters next fall. VisitNC was very excited and looks forward to helping launch this project.

The second program we're working on is called Moore County Storywalks Program. Dan and our new employee, Ashley Baker, have developed this idea for a storywalk, using Winnie the Pooh characters. Dan will cut out and paint the characters from durable PVC sheets. They will be placed on 3-5 trails around the destination. QR codes will be used to tell the stories, which Dan is writing himself, but we plan to have reviewed and approved by educators. This is something fun to do with kids, as we get asked all the time, what is there to do with kids here. The license to use the Pooh characters, was released, as of February 2022, so there is no restriction on using these images.

Next, Phil went over our new program, which is a companion to the Sandhills Pour Tour. It is called the Sandhills Wine Trail. The Pour Tour has been such a success and people keep asking what's next. The Wine Trail will encompass six locations: Cypress Bend Vineyards, Sandhills Winery, Village Wine Shop, Triangle Wine Co, Wine Cellar, and James Creek. Again, when you make any purchase, you will get your passport stamped. Once completed, bring it into the CVB office and receive either a wine tumbler or aerating wine pourer, and a Donald Ross coin, while they last.

The Golf Pride and Ship Sticks campaign was a great success. Total entries were 9,751, and the CVB opt ins were more than the Golf Pride and Ship Sticks opt-ins. This campaign brought a lot of new users to our website and Ship Sticks have already said, any time we want to collaborate on another project to let them know.

Phil gave an update on the Firepit Collective Project. They were here the week after the US Women's Open and did a lot of filming around the destination. There's a mixture of golf related content, as well as non-golf related content. The 5 segments have a landing page on our website which Phil encouraged everyone to go check out. In addition to the video content, we got all the raw footage, to use at our discretion.

Phil showed the board the cover for the 2023 Destination Guide. It shows the US Kids Golf Parade of Nations, with The Carolina Hotel in the background.



Phil showed a video that Dan did recently, that was shown at a fundraising event, One Wonderful Night, for the Weymouth Center. They are celebrating the 100th anniversary. He explained that in addition to the videos we produce as marketing tools, we also do videos to help in our community, such as ones for Habitat for Humanity, Carthage Mural Trail, the Moore County Airport, etc.

In addition to all the golf marketing, Phil gave lots of examples of the non-golf content that we have on our website, as well as several items of promotional material that is sent out in eblasts and newsletters.

### **Board Member Reports**

Member Parsons stated that the Chamber is now a staff of three. They recently hired AnnaBeth Rives, and she started last month. She is the Community Relations Manager, in charge of a lot of the social media. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at Sandhills Community College, the results from the employer survey will be discussed in regard to, workforce development issues. The issue of childcare is still being widely discussed and member Parsons has been named to the NC Chamber Childcare Task Force. She stated that the Chamber has had a great year and she appreciates everyone's support.

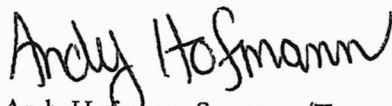
### **Unfinished Business**

Chairman Pashley stated that at the last meeting, there was discussion regarding the concept of a grant program, to give money to some of our small-town events and help enhance them. Phil and Ashley worked hard and created a master list of all the community events in Moore County, and they were contacted, about the idea, of the grant program. As it turns out, not everyone shares the CVB's vision of growth and enhancement, of their events. They were fine with the events just as they are. There may still be a couple of events that we partner with and do some things to promote and grow them. However, the original idea to help several of our communities and foster good will with the municipalities is seemingly off the table. Discussion ensued regarding giving a symbolic gesture to the municipalities, to show that, if in the future, the room occupancy tax rate is increased, we could have means, to help fund projects that would enhance the destination. The question was raised, can we legally do that? There was additional discussion regarding ideas, for a product development fund if the occupancy tax is increased. It was decided to put on the next meeting's agenda, to once again broach the commissioners, to raise the room occupancy tax rate.

### **New Business**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2022, at the Chamber offices. With no further business, Chairman Pashley adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Andy Hofmann, Secretary/Treasurer